

A BIT OF DIPLOMACY

An English Official Who Outwitted a French Admiral.

HOW PERIM ISLAND WAS WON

The interesting story that is told by a White House on the Foreshore of the Arabian Coast at the Southern Entrance to the Red Sea.

On the foreshore of the Arabian coast in the strait of Bab-el-Mandeb, at the southern entrance to the Red sea, stands a large white house concerning which the travelers to the far east may hear a curious story. In the middle of the nineteenth century, when M. de Lesseps after many difficulties had successfully floated the Suez Canal company, the governor of the British port of Aden, about 100 miles distant, was surprised one morning by the visit of a French squadron of very unusual size for that part of the orient, which, having encountered a terrific storm off Sokotra, had put in for repairs.

In the mind of the governor curiosity was at once aroused as to the destination of so large a command, a curiosity which increased as he found it impossible to extract any further information from the French admiral or his officers beyond the statement that they were upon an ordinary cruise, an explanation which the former was not the least inclined to believe.

Firm in the belief, therefore, that some political move of great importance was afoot, if not afoot, the governor, in order first of all to gain time, gave orders to go very tortoise-like on the repairs and then set to work to take the Frenchmen off their guard by giving a succession of such entertainments as both his slender means and the awful barrenness of the place would afford.

But, though at the end of two weeks the French and British officers had got upon the best of terms, the immediate destination of the French squadron remained as much of a mystery to the governor of Aden as before, and in spite of all possible delay the repairs were nearly completed.

Now, it happened that the wife of the governor possessed an Irish maid, who had been receiving attentions from one of the French petty officers—attentions which the girl did not regard seriously. It occurred to the governor that by such means something might be learned of his unexpected visitor's plans, and a private conversation between the governor's wife and her maid resulted in another between the latter and her French admirer, by which it was discovered that Perim Island was the objective point.

At this information the governor opened his eyes wide indeed, for, if the Suez canal were cut through, Perim, as commanding the southern entrance to the Red sea, in the middle of the strait of Bab-el-Mandeb, would be a place of great strategic importance, over which, without doubt, it was the intention of the French admiral to hoist the tricolor.

Secretly giving orders, therefore, for a gunboat to immediately embark a detachment of soldiers and steal away in the night for Perim Island, the governor then announced a farewell banquet and ball for the day but one following, a final act of courtesy with which the French admiral would willingly have dispensed, for he was anxious to sail, but which he could not well refuse on account of the use he had made of the British supplies and machinery at Aden.

So the dinner and party in due course came off, the governor being in high spirits, because in the meantime he had received the news of the occupation of Perim, which under the circumstances would surely be followed by the longed for promotion, and the French admiral was equally happy, for he hoped on the morrow to add the same important little speck of land to the dominion of his own country, thereby covering his breast with the stars and himself with maritime glory.

Next day, after an interchange of cordial farewells, the French squadron sailed away to an apparently unknown destination, until, when clear of the land, the course was laid full speed direct for Perim Island.

Then what were the dismay and disappointment of the French admiral and his officers when, on coming in sight of their destination, they beheld the British flag flying and a company of soldiers drawn up to give them a proper salute. It is said the French admiral was so mortified at being thus outwitted that he first flung his cocked hat overboard and then followed it himself into the sea.

Be this as it may, as Perim was clearly already occupied by the British, the only counter move which the French could make was to take possession of a strip of the foreshore on the opposite Arabian coast, where they built the fortified white house in question, but as the place was entirely at the mercy of the guns on Perim Island it was shortly abandoned, to remain to this day as a monument of a French admiral's undoing.—Exchange.

In Honor of Minerva.

The most notable festival at Athens was in honor of Minerva. All classes of citizens on this particular day marched in procession. The oldest went first, then the young men, then the children, the young women, the matrons and the people of the lower orders. The most prominent object in the parade was a ship propelled by hidden machinery and bearing at its masthead the sacred banner of the goddess.

Read and Ingalls. "Why don't you grow?" said Tom Reed to Senator Ingalls some years ago, when both men were in the service of the people at Washington. "Ah," said Ingalls, who was of very slight stature, "I'm too much interested in my fellows' life and property to assume to your magnificent height and proportion."

"And is not that my concern, too?" asked Reed deliberately. "Impossible!" said Ingalls. "Walk on the edge of a board walk and you lift up the other end; stand in the middle and you break through. The people's safety lies in your being a middle of the road man."

Some days after Reed found Ingalls in a state of mental distraction. "Just swallowed the gold fillings of this front tooth," explained Senator Ingalls, pointing to the exposed cavity. Reed laughed immoderately. He drew himself up to his full height. As a victor he stood; his time of revenge had come.

"Ingalls, I congratulate you. You are now worth your weight in gold."

Ought to Have Known Him. "About the limit of nerve that ever came under my observation," said an ex-prosecutor, "happened a few days ago when a man walked into my office and solicited a small loan. That he was drunk and had been for several days was evident at a glance. Dirty, bleary eyed, unshaven and with hands that shook like those of a professional roman candle shooter, he saluted me with easy familiarity, calling me by my first name. His face was vaguely familiar to me, but I could not recall where I had seen him. He asked for a quarter. I compromised with a dime. He took it with profuse thanks.

"Let's see," I called to him as he turned to go. "I can't quite place you. Who are you?"

"He wheeled and looked at me with an expression of pained surprise. 'What! Don't know me! Why, good Lord, John! You put me in jail three times for wife beating!'"—Kansas City Star.

Some Measures.

Herbert Spencer scorned the metric system because it rests solely on the fact that man has but ten fingers. However, a mile is but a "mille passuum," or a thousand paces. The length of the foot was used for distances long before it was fixed at twelve inches. A "furlong" is only a furrowlong. The breadth of the hand became the standard because the easiest way of measuring the height of the horse. The length of the arm gave the length of the "ell," and from the elbow to the tip of the middle finger was the "cubit." By stretching out both arms as if on a cross man invented the measure of the "fathom." Cloth measure still decrees that two and one-half inches make a "nail," and this is the width of four fingers held together and measured across the nails. The apothecary's "dram" originally signified "only as much raw spirit as can be held in the mouth."

Editorial Pleasantries. Two editors quarreled, and one referred to the other's early career in his paper.

"As for our contemporary," he wrote, "what can we expect from a man who was five years ago hawking from door to door with a donkey, and an ill conditioned beast at that?"

His rival did not deny it, but in his next issue appeared the following: "Our contemporary says that five years ago we were 'hawking from door to door with a donkey, and an ill conditioned beast at that.' He is quite right. We were so occupied. But we are surprised to find the donkey has such a good memory."

Won by a Nose.

"Bernard Shaw," said a dramatic critic, "always does the original thing I went to see 'Caesar and Cleopatra' with him once, and as we stood in the aisle—the house was crowded—a stranger behind us persisted in poking his head right over Shaw's shoulder. "Shaw then did the original thing. Taking out his handkerchief, he wiped the man's nose, patting and twisting it pretty vigorously.

"The man, with an ugly oath, jerked back his head.

"Oh, I beg your pardon," said Shaw. "I thought it was mine, you know."—Washington Star.

Ready to Bargain.

Sutor (to her father)—Sir, I love the very young girl daughter treads on. Father (grimly)—Well, young man, you ain't the first party that's had an attachment for it. Howsoever, if you love it well enough to come and help pay up the mortgage on it you can marry Sarah.—Exchange.

Hopeless.

Lawyer—You don't like the jury? Defendant—I do not. No. 1 is my tailor, No. 3 is my grocer, No. 5 is my milk and egg dealer and No. 7 is my wife's first husband. What chance have I got?—St. Paul Dispatch.

Expressed Differently.

"Madam, you ought to go to a warmer climate." "For once, doctor, you and my husband are agreed, but he expresses the idea in more appropriate language."—New York Press.

He Contributed.

Missionary—Do you ever contribute money for the children in foreign lands, sir? Millionaire—Oh, yes. Both my daughters married foreign noble men.

Those who are greedy of praise prove that they are poor in merit. Plutarch.

THE PUMA AND ITS PREY.

Ease With Which a Patagonian Lion Killed a Colt.

The puma is so fond of horseflesh that in Patagonia it is difficult to breed horses, as the colts are killed by this American lion. A native told the author of "The Naturalist in La Plata" that on one occasion while driving his horses home through a thicket a puma sprang out of the bushes to the back of a colt following behind the troop.

The puma alighted directly on the colt's back, with one fore foot grasping its shoulder, while with the other it seized the head and, giving it a violent wrench, dislocated the neck. The colt fell to the earth as if shot.

Next to horseflesh, the puma prefers mutton. He does not like veal, although he will kill a calf upon occasion. A cunning puma which on cloudy nights raided a sheep ranch used as a place of concealment the pen where a dozen calves were kept while it was waiting to attack the sheep, but it did not injure a calf.

Pigs when in large herds defy the puma by massing themselves together and presenting a serried line of tusks. The ass also resists successfully the puma's attack. When assaulted it thrusts its head between its fore legs and kicks violently until the puma is driven or thrown off.

One day an Indian while riding saw a young cow watching his approach. Her manner showed that it was in a state of dangerous excitement, and the Indian conjectured that some beast of prey had killed its calf. He began searching for the calf's body. While thus engaged the cow repeatedly charged him. Presently he discovered the calf lying dead among the long grass and by its side a dead puma with a large wound just behind the shoulder.

The calf had been killed by the puma, for its throat showed the wounds of large teeth. The cow had driven one of its long, sharp horns into the puma's side while it was sucking the calf's blood.

SLOW NEW YORK.

It Actually Made the Hustling Western Barber Sleepy.

"Why, say," said a visiting barber from the wide untrammeled west, "you folks here in New York are narrow, limited, shackled, contracted, far behind the age. You think you are the human limit when really your gait is very slow.

"I went into one of your shops here yesterday. Nice shop, good equipment, everything fine and elegant, but when I saw how slow you were here on the work it made me nervous. A good plant, but not worked to capacity. "They had a man in a chair with a barber cutting his hair and a manicure fixing his hands and a bootblack blacking his shoes all at the same time, and I suppose you think here that that's going some to have three people work on a customer all at once, but, goodness me, you ought to look into my shop and see how we do things in my part of the country!

"I've got a shop that's every bit as modern and up to date to the last limit as anything you've got in New York, but out there we utilize our plant. What do you suppose we do when a man comes in that's in a hurry to catch a train? Think we all lie down and take a nap?

"Why, we put one barber to cutting his hair and another to shaving him, and two manicurers tackle his hands, one on each side. We take off his shoes, and two boys work on them, each blacking a single shoe, while two chiropodists get at him, each taking a foot, and at the same time we have one boy brushing the customer's hat and another brushing his overcoat, while another dusts the clothes he's got on with a vacuum duster.

"You put three people on a man at once and think you're doing something. We put on eleven and think nothing about it at all, and our town ain't a quarter as big as New York—not a quarter.

"Why, honest, this New York atmosphere makes me sleepy!"—New York Sun.

An Old Machine.

The Tübingen Morgenblatt of Oct. 31, 1829, contains a description of such a machine as then in use in the London coffee house. It was in the shape of a tobacco jar, which stood on the table and had a slot into which a penny had to be inserted to obtain a pipette of tobacco. The weight of the coin depressed a lever and released a lock. The writer adds that a halfpenny would not do the trick, and the would-be cheat could not recover his money.—London Notes and Queries.

The Judge Agreed.

It is recorded that Lord Mansfield, the famous English judge of the second half of the eighteenth century, listened impatiently to an argument of Sir Fletcher Norton upon a case involving certain manorial rights. "My lord," said Norton, who was insufferably dictatorial, "I can instance the point in person. I have myself two little manors."

"We are well aware of that," responded Lord Mansfield, seizing his opportunity.

Caution Extraordinary.

"You have a night key?" "Of course," answered Mr. Meekton, "only I'm so careless that Henrietta keeps it locked up in the safety deposit so that I won't lose it."—Washington Star.

After Their Quarrel.

Mabel—Of course you speak to Lena when you pass her? Helen—Indeed, I do not. Why, I don't even notice what she has on!—Puck.

Chinese Floating Hotel.

A floating hotel is to be established in China. The vessel will have three decks, the lower being arranged for dining, billiard, smoking and card rooms. The main deck will contain a drawing room and 24 bedrooms, each with a full-sized bath and dressing room, while the upperdeck, or spar deck, has been arranged as a promenade.

Always There.

If all who count themselves happy were to tell, very simply, what it was that brought happiness to them, the others would see that between sorrow and joy the difference is but as between a gladness, enlightened acceptance of life and a hostile, gloomy submission; between a large and harmonious conception of life and one that is stubborn and narrow.—Maeterlinck.

Roman Post Houses.

Post houses on Roman roads were erected every five or six miles. Each of them was constantly provided with 40 horses and 100 miles a day was an easy journey. Any one using these posts must show a mandate from the emperor.

A Tight Place.

Stout Party (who has dropped cigar)—Now, which can I afford to lose—my cigar or my back button.—London Opinion.

Success.

Success doesn't depend so much on doing big things now and then, but on doing little things well.

Where Poultry Pays.

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